

**PART XXII.—EMPLOYMENT OF WILD TRIBES.**

1. With respect to Bhils and other ancient inhabitants of the forests, it cannot be too much impressed upon the Forest Officers that the forest regulations must be applied with judgment, and every occasion sought of winning over the forest tribes to the cause of conservancy, by not interfering with the rights that they have heretofore enjoyed, wherever such rights can be permitted to continue, and also by supplying them with regular occupation in the service of the Department, so as in time to train them to settled habits. (S. of S. No. 34 (Revenue), dated 25th June 1866; *vide* G. R. No. 2768, dated 1st August 1866.)

2. The proposals contained in the following extract paragraphs 3 to 5 of a letter No. 1410, dated 3rd May 1879, from the Collector of Thána, relative to the employment of wild tribes as Rakhwáldárs in the demarcated forests of the Thána District and assignment to them of waste lands in the area situated outside the limits of the forests in that district, were approved by Government:—

“3. Under the scheme I would propose a number of the wild tribes can be employed as forest ‘Rakhwáldárs’ to look after and preserve the demarcated jungles receiving small rent-free holdings for service rendered. These holdings would be but small in area, and being given for service could not be alienated.

“4. Those not employed as ‘Rakhwáldárs’ should be allotted small holdings from the land to be excluded from the forest reserves in the lists now under preparation. To these holdings Bombay Act I, of 1865, would not apply and the holders should be charged a very low rate of rent, say from 2 to 4 annas an acre, but before being put in possession it should be clearly explained to them that any attempt to alienate, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of their occupancy will involve its forfeiture. A *kabuláyat* to the effect might also be taken, for from experience of their improvidence I know that so long as they are allowed any transferable or saleable right in land they are sure to part with it on the first favourable opportunity to a wily *sávkár* or other *pándherpesha*.

“5. In the carrying out of this scheme the greatest care will be necessary to avoid inducing those of the wild tribes now tilling the land of, or labouring for, superior landholders to desert their present occupation. Any such result would increase the number of those to be provided for and possibly cause culturable land to be thrown out of occupation.”

(G. R. No. 3525, dated 5th July 1879.)

3. It is desirable, as a matter of policy, that employment of a suitable description should be provided for the Bhils, and that occupation should especially be furnished to those who have earned their livelihood wholly or in part by wood-cutting. This occupation can best, and without difficulty, be supplied by the Forest Department. The Bhils should, therefore, be employed by that Department as wood-cutters to fell and, if this course is practicable, to bring in, the trees selected for the axe. It is the wish of Government that the Bhils should be employed to the fullest extent possible by the Forest Department, and that no opportunity should be lost of utilising Bhil labour and engaging them in the

forest operations which are most congenial to their tastes and mode of life and for which they are peculiarly qualified. Government must insist upon the grant by the Forest Department to the Bhils of employment to the largest practicable extent. It must be left to the Collector and the Conservator in consultation to decide how exactly this object is to be carried out, on what principle remuneration is to be given, and how the work is to be allotted and supervised, but the instructions of Government regarding the employment of Bhils must be complied with. (G. R. No. 1140, dated 24th February 1881.)

4. The system of employing Bhils and other wild tribes in the Forest Department as Rakhwáldárs, cultivating small holdings rent-free for service performed, and stationed on the borders of forests and inside large reserves in the wilder parts of the country, should be developed when forest settlements are completed and forest reserves are finally constituted. (G. R. No. 3990, dated 9th July 1881.)

5. The practice of the Forest Department in Sind of obtaining the services of gangs of villagers for putting up Persian wheels, mending bunds, making clearings for plantation, putting up or mending fences, &c., and giving the men a feed in lieu of wages, is not only economical, but tends to secure the good-will of the villagers; and its continuance is sanctioned. (G. R. No. 2157, dated 1st April 1882.)

6. Thákurs, Katkaris and other wild tribes who dwell within forest limits should be employed as the carriers of the Forest Department. (G. R. No. 968, dated 31st January 1885.)

7. The attention of Government has been drawn to the condition of the Kolis of the gháts by the criminal proceedings of outlaws of Junnar Táluka. Some general measure, such as was proposed in 1879-80, to give employment to Rámcsis and Kolis by enlisting them in a local corps would perhaps be the best solution of the chronic difficulty of the Police in preserving order among the Kolis, but His Excellency the Governor in Council believes the reasons why these occasional outbreaks of lawlessness have always grown to some head before they are controlled is to be found, next to 'heredity,' in the poverty of the people. Unless they are induced to migrate, this poverty will increase owing to growth of population and forest conservancy restricting their cultivation and their means of getting wood to burn for manure or to sell. The attempt made in 1879 to get Kolis to migrate was in spite of every inducement offered unsuccessful, and it is believed that they are not yet ready to adopt that remedy for their condition in any large number.

As an immediate measure of relief the Governor in Council thinks that it would be well to spend a

certain sum every year in the Akōla, Junnar, Khed and Mával talukas on road-making. By this means their country would be opened up, the value of their crops and of the Government forest would be gradually increased, and they would be enabled to earn a little money for themselves and their families. It is not the intention of Government to make the expensive class of road which employs mainly skilled labour in its construction, but rather an inferior class with a view to the employment of unskilled labour in construction and repairs for a few years to come. This may not be easy in the ghát country, but the end sought is to give work as much as to open communications.

The District Local Boards should be called on to assist.

(G. R. No. 5616, dated 24th August 1887.)

8. Attention is directed to the following extract from the minute on the conservancy of the Dáng Forests by His Excellency Sir Richard Temple, dated July 7th, 1879 :—

“ Consideration should be had to the case of any Bhils who may be settled in the lands proposed to be taken up. Indeed it would be better not to propose lands where Bhils happen to be thus settled. But in fact it is understood that there are few, if any, Bhils thus settled, and that almost all, if not all, of them are migratory in their habits. If, however, there be any Bhil family settled within an area proposed to be reserved, then it cannot be moved without compensation in some form or other, or without some satisfactory arrangement being made. It may happen that individuals thus situated can be entertained as employés by the Forest Department, and so rendered content to live under its régime. At all events it must be understood that if any Bhil be found settled, he cannot be summarily removed against his will.”

The inexpediency of the removal from their homes of any Bhil families who have *permanently settled* in any particular spot, abandoning a nomadic life, should be carefully borne in mind. It is of more importance to encourage the Bhils in such a course than to constitute an ideally perfect reserve, and in general it should be understood by the officers concerned that in dealing with a wild people such as the Bhils they cannot err in adopting a lenient policy.

(G. R. No. 7903, dated 7th November 1890.)